



Lessons learned

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a relaxing break, and I wish you health, happiness and much success in 2012.

This year has started off well. I just came back from a successful trip to North America. One of the main objectives of the trip was to connect Rich (Lebitz) with our main customers; this went very smoothly. We had a great dialogue with the in-country manager of the Energy Sector and a fruitful discussion with the CEO and CFO in Canada. The question now is: How can we continue to maintain our positive standing in the future? I also met with the Corporate Compliance Director in the U.S. For the dialogue to continue being successful, we need to meet with them at least once a quarter.

In general, it's clear that much needs to be done to strengthen the relationship with our customers in the U.S. We must proactively reach out. As our motto for client service – “There is no substitute for personal contact” – emphasizes, maintaining a client relationship and building up trust are not tasks that can be delegated to others.

I also had the chance to catch up with local CF A management. Sometimes you think you know your organization inside out, and sometimes, you find out how much there is still to learn. I had an eye-opening discussion while having lunch with the directors. We talked about the challenges they were facing as career coaches – the same ones all of CF A face. Are we spending sufficient time on coaching? Do we have the time? Ideally, those with disciplinary responsibilities should see their direct reports once every six weeks to discuss their development. Do we have the right knowledge, i.e. do we have sufficient understanding of Siemens? Are we ready and willing to be the innovative career coaches we need to be?

It was a week of many valuable lessons. In Canada, I learned that when you've completed a roadshow, you need to follow up, otherwise you run the risk of damaging your reputation. As we all know, it is harder to regain trust than to earn it in the first place.

From spending time in the U.S., I also learned how important it is to have an office concept, and I will be working on that the next months. We already invested in flexible office equipment and in creating comfortable team environments in other locations. We encourage everyone to take make use of this set up. Dedicated seats are no longer the norm, so feel free to utilize the desks that are available and book conference rooms as needed. But, don't forget about information security. It seems simple, and it is. Lock your Windows when you leave your desk, don't leave your PCs on your desk when you leave at night, and lock drawers containing confidential information.

One last note before I close this. As promised during University, we're launching the CAO Dialogue Quarterly Videos this year. In addition to the regular blog updates, I will be giving quarterly updates in the form of a video.

Next week, I will sit down with a couple of CF A members to discuss the results and events of the last quarter, take a look back at University and touch on target setting for 2012.

Stay tuned. The video of that conversation will go online in the next couple of weeks.

Yours,
Hans